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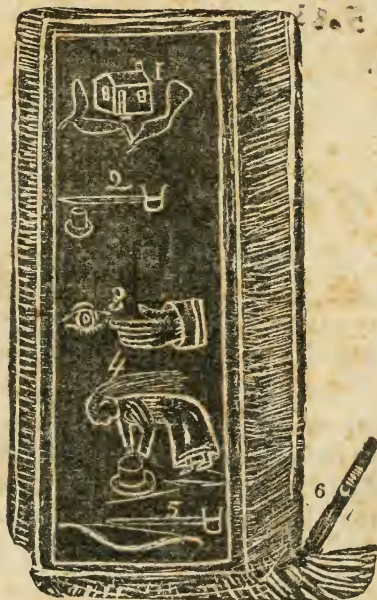
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# IMPORTANT INDIAN MANUSCRIPTS,



Reference to the  
figures:

1. The white men who have been trading at the four lakes, quarrelled.
2. The white man killed his comrade.
3. They will use deception and blind our eyes.
4. His wife has concealed him.
5. The long knives (or white men will take revenge upon the Indians & strike us, to the earth.
6. On the sixth day of the moon or July 2d. at ten o'clock, this murder was done.

"Explanation of the above cut, See page 7."

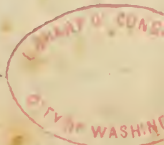
**Translated by L. S. BACKUS,**

PROFESSOR OF THE SIGN LANGUAGE, EDITOR OF THE  
CANAJOHARIE RADII, &C.

CANAJOHARIE, N. Y.:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR.

1840.



Brinley 5633  
no. 1.

The principal events herein recorded *are true.*

The *murder* is yet remembered by many persons. One of the actors was put upon his trial for the murder of his partner at *Prairie du Chien* and was acquitted.

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Ch. H.



## INTRODUCTION.

It may not occur to the reader at the first glance the important interest of this manuscript to the public—even the small portion which we have transcribed. To the linguist it offers a wide field of speculation.

The efforts of the mind to communicate important events to distant friends is here developed. It shows how the savage when driven by necessity, can perpetuate a record of his actions, or those of his enemies in characteristic emblems. To the antiquarian, even this small scrap must prove a source of gratification. In this he will see the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians; he will assimilate the wood engraving of the Chinese to the etching on the tree. The imagination will be carried back to the time when the nations of this country recorded the deeds of their chiefs and warriors in a symbolical language.

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We are informed that several specimens of pictorial language are found with the Western Indians, and that the declaration of war between the United States and Great Britain in 1812, was etched on trees in such characters that the Indians from Lake Erie to the Falls of St. Anthony, not only knew the belligerent attitude of the two nations; but a faithful record of the causes which were supposed to lead to the rupture, was communicated therewith. These records were placed in the principal places and resorts where the Indians were known to congregate; thus the portage of the Wisconsin where this scrap we publish was taken, is a point eminently qualified for the deposit of important information—at that place, the Fox river ap-

proaches within less than a mile of the Wisconsin, and both diverging in different directions—one discharging its waters into the Gulf of Mexico, via. the Mississippi, and the other into the St. Lawrence by the lakes. It was a thoroughfare in which the nations were expected to pass daily going in every direction. How important was it then that each member of the tribe should be informed of the danger and the attendant circumstances which encompassed them! Had they no knowledge of symbolic communication, necessity would drive them into some similar measure.

To the admirers of romantic incidents, this story exemplifies what has often been asserted, that “truth is stranger than fiction;” and it may bring to view in faint outlines the peculiar characteristics of singular beings which pioneer the “great west.” The traders and trappers are men of no ordinary capacity—generally they compose a body of desperate characters, who have left the boon of civilization either to escape the penalty of the laws, or find the field of enterprize too circumscribed for their ambition. Some, too, are inveigled into the “Indian country” by the hopes of an enjoyment of independent indolence, which they soon find is imaginary—as the most tyrannical of masters they carry with them—their *stomachs*! Those persons find when it is too late, that more industry must be exerted to live in that primitive state, than in civilized society, and they turn out a set of misanthropic desperadoes, seeking by every means to cheat the natives or such unsophisticated white men as come within their reach to assist *them* in dragging out a miserable existence. Those men, generally, demean themselves below the savages, and live near them, or become a kind of supernumerary interpreters—carriers, or servants to the trading establishments.

It is the Indian trader that is the lion of the forest. Among his semi-barbarian confederates and savage customers, he is looked up to as the [dispenser of justice—the provider of their necessities; and as the Indians have now become degraded—an indispensable personage amongst them.—Without him they could neither feed nor clothe



themselves ; and his profits are proportioned to the confidence which the natives place in him ; consequently, there is nothing to fear but competition from the white man.

As the profits are enormous, both on the goods which they sell, and the furs which they receive in payment, they afford a considerable credit to those Indians with whom they place confidence, and endure much inconvenience, not only from the isolated condition which they are placed, but the vexatious community, that forms their customers must be endured with a patience and forbearance, which would become a martyr. Consequently, a long acquaintance is of great importance to know where confidence may be placed, and on whom his rigid authority and discipline is to be exerted.

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The wife of an Indian is a slave under the most tyrannical of masters. When the Indian woman has the fortune to put herself under the protection of a white man, she feels her emancipation in every form. She witnesses the degradation of her kindred ; and her own exalted happiness. That those Indian women should prove true to the white man is no more than would be expected—that springs from one of the noblest virtues implanted in the human breast—gratitude.

Hence, Indian traders have found their interest prompted them to marry a woman as nearly connected with the chiefs or influential men as possible ; and when they wished messages communicated to any of the different posts or stations if it was of great importance, they invariably despatched their wives on the mission—which they suc-

successfully execute, or perish in the attempt. Thus : trader would despatch as a messenger from Mackinaw to Prairie du Chien—to St. Peters, or even the head water of the Missouri or Columbia rivers—a lone Indian woman who had to pass among strange tribes—known enemies and invidious rival traders—desolate countries and wild beasts, such as very few white *men* would dare encounter and they have been known to return after years' captivity, among enemies, without once betraying their trust.

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The following cut is a fac-simile of an etching on the bark of a tree, situated at the portage of the Wisconsin near where Fort Winnebago now stands. It was in a conspicuous place, and duplicates were afterwards found in several places throughout the Winnebago nation.

The incidents to which this disclosure relates, were detailed to the author of this article by a person who was present during the interview of the father with his daughter, when he demanded either she should discover where her husband was CONCEALED, or suffer DEATH !

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—From the above translation we find the facts bear us out fully in the interpretation made above. The question may be asked how we arrive at the deductions urged as an explanation of the hieroglyphics?

The exact time is designated by a stake stuck in the ground, as represented at the bottom of the plate, that "POINTS DIRECTLY" to the PLACE THE SUN WAS IN the heavens which gives the time of day, viz. : 10 o'clock, *when* the murder was perpetrated.

On that inclined stake is the figure of the moon with the marks which give her age. That definitely gives a date to the transaction viz. : July 2d.

At the top of the cut a house with four lakes are shown which gives the location ; consequently, the names of the occupants and the particular form of the hut shows it to belong to the whites.

The next figure as we proceed downward is the HAT and sword, which readily conveys the idea that white men are in deadly strife and one has the victory.

The hand and the eye. By this figure we learn most forcibly that an attempt was made at deception, which supposition is fully warranted by subsequent disclosures.

The next figure is the woman hiding the hat, which in the simple language of the natives showed by her flowing hair that she was a wife and her posture over the hat showed she was concealing her husband.

The next and last figure is the sword over the bow. By that we learn that the Indians are about to be exterminated by the whites, as the bow represents the natives, and the sword the *long knives* or *whites*.

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This cut or figure which we have transcribed, and offered the above as a translation, was prominently etched on the smoothed surface of a small tree, near the Indian trail which the Indians were daily in the habit of passing.

At a short distance from this primitive telegraph, a fire was kindled in an old tree for an index or a beacon to attract the attention of the passing native.

The intense interest which this document excited, can

only be imagined by those acquainted with the condition of the Indians. *They knew* how this would affect them as a nation: *they knew* the people which surrounded them—and the object that would induce the whites to impute any crime to them for the purpose of exciting a spirit of revenge for the pretext of wresting from the rightful owners of the soil—a possession which was so much coveted, yet had never been peaceably obtained.

All that section of country bordering on on the Wisconsin and extending from the Mississippi to the great lakes, had belonged to the Winnebagoes, and held peaceably by them until within a few years previous to this occurrence, when the whites had discovered that this section of country contained the most valuable lead mines in the world, and were using every means to dispossess them.

The whites were composed of squatters, and men of desperate character. What cared they for honor or integrity? They belonged to no country! Many of them if caught within the pale of the laws, would suffer its penalties.—What were the rights of the Indians to them? Their object was money! The surest and readiest method of obtaining their wishes was to create as much excitement as possible; and could they confirm the story, (which had already gained considerable credence,) THAT THE INDIANS HAD KILLED BOTH OF THE TRADERS AT THE FOUR LAKES; THE WHOLE AMERICAN people would have asserted the quarrel and speedily revenge the outrage by a war which would end in a treaty and a concession of the land which these vagabond squatters were so anxious to obtain possession.

Those that knew the truth, and were aware that one of the traders had murdered his partner, could gain nothing by circulating the report; while if the guilt could be placed on the Indians; it would add another item to the long account, and furnish additional proof why the natives should be dispossessed.

The effect of this information upon the Indians, was to create the greatest consternation. They had come in possession of the *truth*, and not only knew who was the mur-

derer, but the disastrous effects, which the slander would have, if suffered to be affixed on the nation. Although they might affirm their innocence ; yet it would not be noticed. The dead body of one of the traders was to be found in his cabin which was surrounded by Indians ; many of whom were in the daily habit of visiting the premises of the deceased and the story would soon gain credence, and their guilt fully established, when left to be judged by those who wished it might be so. Notwithstanding one alternative, and one only remained to be tried to convince the whites of their innocence, viz.: to produce the *murderer*, and prove him guilty who they knew was the partner of the deceased ; and as he had taken refuge in their nation, it was of vital importance that the fugitive should be taken, and their innocence established.

Those simple sons of the forest knew the important bearing which the slander imputed to them would have on their destiny—and trembled for the result. The vindictive character of the whites and their superior facilities in executing their designs ; yet they felt disposed to make every effort to place the guilt where it properly belonged viz : upon PETER McNALLY, who had murdered his friend and partner, James Bawmen.

Yet one great obstacle remained :

The whites would not believe but a double murder had been committed, and McNally equally a victim with his partner, until his body was produced either dead or alive.

In the present condition this could not be easily effected. McNally had married and otherwise connected himself with the principal chiefs of the Winnebago tribe. He had secured the friendship of numberless persons belonging to the nation, which he now looked upon as his protectors ;—and, above all, he was SECRETED BY HIS WIFE AND PLACED, With such confidants as SHE KNEW would not betray the trust imposed in them.

In this condition what was to be done ?

A powerful nation encircled them who were brooding over an awful tragedy which they were willing to believe was committed by the Indians ; and there was no other



resort but to produce the real murderer to show their innocence. As they dreaded immediate vengeance, and to put all their countrymen in possession of the facts, not only was it important to place them on the defence, but to bring the felon forward and place in its true light the nature of the transaction in the eyes of their vindictive neighbors; and thus render their innocence manifest.

Hence, the cause why they should have attempted the rude telegraph we have copied which was calculated to transmit the important information throughout the nation, and awaken them to a sense of their danger.

This "manuscript" document was otherwise important as an advertisement or WARRANT to cause the arrest of the homicide; and had the fugitive no friends amongst the Indians, they would have immediately surrendered him to justice, and exculpated themselves from suspicions, and thus explained the mystery.

The Indians had learned before the danger of harboring felons; and this man knew their character too well to trust himself in their power but for *one* which he *knew* could neither be intimidated by fear, or purchased by wealth to betray him.

### AN INDIAN WITNESS.

Upon the banks of the Wisconsin there was a small groupe of Indians, consisting of an aged man who wore the habiliments of a chief; two young Indians, an old squaw, and a young Indian woman, dressed in the fashion of the whites, who bore in her arms a child which appeared near the age of one year. The features of the child betrayed a mixture of the European with the aboriginal blood; and it seemed to exhibit a cheerfulness entirely at variance with the other part of the groupe, who showed a gloomy cast of features, uncommon, even to native Americans. It was readily discovered that some unpleasant ceremony was about to take place.

The old man motioned to the young woman to come near him, who advanced within a few yards—when a rifle was produced and thoroughly examined; the formalities



of cleansing the gun and adjusting the flint was performed, when a charge of powder and ball was placed in it, while the greatest care was taken to show the woman that those preparations were perfect and properly arranged.

While these death-like indications were in progress, the stern eye and rigid features of the father, (for such the chief proved to be) appeared resolved upon some desperate act which called the attention of all the attendants except the woman and child: the former stood before him with a countenance resigned: she fixed her eye upon the child, and totally disdained to bestow the least notice on the preparations of the rifle, although it was readily discovered that it was to intimidate her that so much ceremony was observed in charging the piece.

After a few moments spent in silent contemplation of the woman, the chief advanced and motioned to take the child, when she bestowed a single kiss upon its forehead, and advanced to a small bush near by, placed it upon the ground, and plucked some branches which grew near—collected a few flowers and such trifles as could readily be obtained, placed them in the hands of the child, resumed her place before her father, to all appearance, the least affected of the party. The rifle was at this juncture, resting against a tree; but when the woman had disposed of the child, the father took it in his hands, assured himself that it was in good condition; he gave it to one of the attendants, who immediately pointed it towards the woman's breast, only a few yards distant; and the sudden click of the lock gave notice of the last act of preparation for the discharge of the gun.

Few ears can immoveably receive the sharp sound which is made by fire-arms in the preparatory snap of the lock when the range of its barrel is brought to bear upon the body; but this woman heeded it not, although not a person present but shuddered in expectation of the report and the writhing victim: yet this woman shewed no outward signs that those preparations implicated her existence, although, *she knew* the knell for her earthly departure had sounded; and, in all probability, an instant more and her

fate would be irrevocably sealed. Yet she heeded not all this : her eyes were bent upon the child, showing with maternal glances, a recognition of its innocent amusement and her scorn for their preparations.

At length, the old chief finding the young woman could not be intimidated by the rifle being presented to her breast, he took it from the young Indian, and, advancing with a stern countenance, he addressed her in language, as follows :—

“My daughter, I have now come to the determination, that only on one condition will you ever move from this place alive ! However unpleasant it may be, I feel duty calls upon me to seek your life, unless you point to me the place where McNally, your husband, is concealed ! He is a murderer ! He has arisen upon his brother—and taken his life ! and not content with slaying his comrade, he deceives his countrymen, and throws the disgrace upon the innocent Indians ; and while our friends are hunted in the prairies like the deer, as the assassin of Bamer, you have concealed him—you connived at his crime, and are equally or more guilty, as you see by that infamous deception no quarter is shown our people by the merciless intruders upon the lands of the red men ; but they rejoice at a pretext to kill and destroy the friendless Indians that they may occupy the lands, and drive us from the face of the earth.

“My child, it grieves me, but I am under the stern necessity of requiring this sacrifice. You must comply. You must show the lurking-place of your husband, or your life *must* pay the forfeit. Our people demand it, and justly too, that you *shall* show where the murderer is concealed.

“What have the white men done since their first landing in this happy country ? What has become of the towns and villages of the red men who once lived here ? Where are the nations that once inhabited this country ? Who has been the enemy of the red men, and have come here and robbed us of our lands—made wars upon us, even to extermination : and brought vices which were unknown to us before ? Sought by dissensions to divide and destroy us, who had never known or injured them—and are not yet

contented but commit crimes among themselves; and strive with a fiendish cunning to throw the disgrace upon us that they may have some pretext for continuing their murders and robberies upon us. What chance have we for justice? Under what disadvantages do we not labor. If an Indian kills or robs a white man, in a few days the story is printed in thousands of places, and is known to *all* their people:—revenge is in their power, and none durst raise an arm to avert their dreaded resistance; but if the poor Indian is killed, would they believe or render justice to his friends or relatives? Would they give up the murderer to be dealt with according to the usages of *our* nation? No! They would insult the emissaries of justice with,

“Go away, you are an Indian!”

“My daughter the wrongs which we sustain from the whites are many. They force us from our hunting grounds, from our mines, our corn fields, and our fisheries. Is that done because they have none? Have they not possession of all the country from the sea to the Mississippi? and yet they wish for more—and they want all—that the Indians may have none. They have succeeded in debasing us below the brutes of the forest, and now they wish to exterminate us. They are not satisfied with the effect of the vices which are introduced amongst us—that mode of destruction is too tardy—wars, famine and persecution must be added, and those destroyers of your people, your friends and relatives you strive to befriend and exculpate from crimes which, *you know* they are guilty of committing.

Your husband brought whiskey in our nation—when the Indian drank of it he became addicted to its use, and then became a vagabond on the earth; yet you wish to preserve his life, that he may bring more misery upon our nation.

“Why do you wish to conceal the man that would murder his partner? Are you not in danger of falling beneath his vengeance? The man that would kill his friend and partner, only waits for an opportunity to destroy his wife. Such persons have no love nor affection for their kindred—even the meanest reptile that crawls upon the earth, has more fellow-feeling—for *they* burrow together in harmony,

If you have no regard for yourself, you owe some respect to our nation : and, so long as he is concealed amongst us, the whites will ascribe the murder of both to the Indians—and will they be idle ? Will they not take vengeance on every one they can find ? How many have already fallen before their hunters, we know not. The time is precious: we know not what plans they are forming to destroy us ; yet, by disclosing where he is, we shall avert the calamity. By concealing him, you show contempt for your nation and relatives ; as the white men will believe we have murdered both the traders, and will punish the innocent for protecting the guilty.

“I seek not your life ;—our people do not demand it ; but, with justice, they ask you to deliver them from the ignominy and danger which the enraged whites will visit upon them, if you persist in concealing the murderer.

“My daughter, there is no alternative : our chiefs in council *demand* the murderer, not your life but your father thinks if you prefer the society of a villain to your kindred, you are unworthy of his protection.

“Therefore prepare and decide immediately ; and do not delay until too late, as you may rely upon the truth of our assertions.”

The old chief called upon her in the most affectionate terms to comply, and surrender her husband ; but she rejected with scorn all such overtures. Stepping out before them, she spoke in real native eloquence, to the following effect.

My father, even the hunted deer will spurn the pursuer of her fawn ! She presents her impotent brow to the hunter in protection of her offspring ; but me, your child, you would deprive of life—and for what ? Is it for any crime of my own ? Is it for want of affection for you ? Or am I unkind to our people ? No ! It is for nothing *I have* done ! But you wish me to commit a crime the most revolting ! You wish me to debase and render myself unworthy of life—to purchase a few years of miserable existence ! I scorn such unworthy artifices ! I would hate myself and be hated by our people ! My life has ever been at your disposal ; but you approach not my husband so long as I have the

power to conceal him! This is the proudest hour of my existence; and happy am I, that fortune has placed me in a situation to render assistance and protection to one that I am bound by so many ties to love, honor and cherish.

You may say my husband has faults—it is not for his wife to see them. I am his partner, and, as such, am bound to conceal his imperfections as my own; and I feel honored that I can, in this manner, testify my regard for him, and show the confidence placed in me, is merited.

If he has committed the crimes you speak of, there is a power above which can find and punish him. When God seeks the guilty, he does not place a deadly weapon to the breast of a woman, and say,

“Go find me a man, for I would kill him!”

If you seek the life of my husband, do not ask me to partake with you in the crime. Let those whom he has injured, seek redress. I have received nought but kindness from him, and why should I seek his destruction? But, supposing he had ever used me unkindly—*now* is the time it should be forgotten.

No human being is perfect—God alone is faultless! Neither you nor the enemies of my husband know the causes which led him to the act you impute to him. God knows, and vengeance is his; and we should be content for him to do justice, without usurping his authority.

You tell me of the degradation of our people—wherein is my husband in fault for that?

You impute, as a crime to him, that the whites have wronged us. Were we never wronged by any but the whites? Have no other nations made war upon us; destroyed our cornfields; our fisheries, and our hunting? and have we not done the same? Have not the Winnebagoes oppressed the Sacs and Foxes, the Otowas, or any nation whom we thought our inferiors.

How often has my father gone to the wars for the purpose of exterminating some neighboring people! as well may you consider that a fault of *mine*. I am as much accountable for those depredations, as my husband is for those of the whites.



If the white men have wronged us, those who have done the injustice, are to blame for the offence. If our nation has become degraded, it is the fault of our people. Delivering my husband into hands of those who will take his life, will neither redress the wrongs which the Indians have suffered from the whites, nor retrieve our condition.

The man whom I have selected for my partner and protector, is dearer than life. You may execute vengeance on me, for I shall *not* reveal the place of his concealment. Had I a thousand lives to sacrifice, they would be cheerfully given rather than betray him.

I fear death less than dishonor.

The time may come, when *you*, while passing my grave, will remember the great crime you are about to commit.

As I ask no mercy for myself, let me ask one favor. It is all I ask, and I shall die contented. You are welcome to *my life*, if you will spare that child! I beseech you by all the affections you have ever borne towards me—by the dying breath of its mother to protect that child! I implore you by the affinity which it bears to you; and the innocent smiles with which it regards you, to remember the offspring of your daughter. I have nothing more to say.—My life is at your disposal.”

By a sign from the old chief, the young Indian took up the rifle and presented the muzzle to her breast, while she, turning towards him, opened the bosom of her dress, when one more appeal was made; but she persisted in her former determination.

The old chief becomingly satisfied that she would not disclose the hiding-place of her husband, was too true to his promise—he gave the word—the short sharp report of the rifle—she fell and expired without a groan—a martyr of constancy to a MURDERER.

Notwithstanding the solicitude of the Indian woman to conceal her husband, he was afterwards taken by the Indians, and surrendered to the whites for trial—but acquitted, *probably*, for the want of proper management in obtaining competent witnesses.



5072 vol. 19

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PART SECOND,

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CANAJOHARIE, N. Y. :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE AUTHOR.

1840.

Brinley 5633

W 7 B 1 2

pt. 2.

no. 2

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The next object with the politic Indian trader is a wife from among the most powerful of the Indian people. He gets by her influence in the tribe, and the most firm attachment known to the human breast.

The wife of an Indian is a slave under the most tyrannical of masters. When the Indian woman has the fortune to put herself under the protection of a white man, she feels her emancipation in every form. She witnesses the degradation of her kindred ; and her own exalted happiness. That those Indian women should prove true to the white man is no more than would be expected—that springs from one of the noblest virtues implanted in the human breast—gratitude.

Hence, Indian traders have found their interest prompted them to marry a woman as nearly connected with the chiefs or influential men as possible ; and when they wished messages communicated to any of the different posts or stations if it was of great importance, they invariably despatched their wives on the mission—which they suc-

cessfully execute, or perish in the attempt. Thus a trader would despatch as a messenger from Mackinaw to Prairie du Chien—to St. Peters, or even the head waters of the Missouri or Columbia rivers—a lone Indian woman, who had to pass among strange tribes—known enemies and invidious rival traders—desolate countries and wild beasts, such as very few white *men* would dare encounter ; and they have been known to return after years' captivity among enemies, without once betraying their trust.

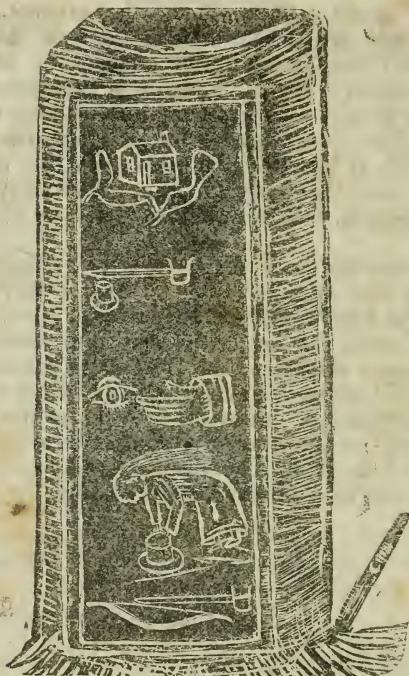
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The following cut is a fac-simile of an etching on the bark of a tree, situated at the portage of the Wisconsin, near where Fort Winnebago now stands. It was in a conspicuous place, and duplicates were afterwards found in several places throughout the Winnebago nation.

The incidents to which this disclosure relates, were detailed to the author of this article by a person who was present during the interview of the father with his daughter, when he demanded either she should discover where her husband was CONCEALED, or suffer DEATH !



# Indian Manuscript



## TRANSLATION.

1. On the sixth day of the moon or July 2d.
2. At ten o'clock.
3. The white men who have been trading at the Four Lakes, quarrelled.
4. The white man killed his brother.
5. The white man will use deception and blind our eyes.
6. His wife has concealed him.
7. The white men are executing vengeance upon us, and mean to exterminate us from the land—or strike the Indians to the earth.



TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—From the above translation we find the facts bear us out fully in the interpretation made above. The question may be asked how we arrive at the deductions urged as an explanation of the hieroglyphics?

The exact time is designated by a stake stuck in the ground, as represented at the bottom of the plate, that "POINTS DIRECTLY" to the PLACE THE SUN WAS in the heavens which gives the time of day, viz. : 10 o'clock, *when* the murder was perpetrated.

On that inclined stake is the figure of the moon with the marks which give her age. That definitely gives a date to the transaction viz. : July 2d.

At the top of the cut a house with four lakes are shown which gives the location ; consequently, the names of the occupants and the particular form of the hut shows it to belong to the whites.

The next figure as we proceed downward is the HAT and sword, which readily conveys the idea that white men are in deadly strife and one has the victory.

The hand and the eye. By this figure we learn most forcibly that an attempt was made at deception, which supposition is fully warranted by subsequent disclosures.

The next figure is the woman hiding the hat, which in the simple language of the natives showed by her flowing hair that she was a wife and her posture over the hat showed she was concealing her husband.

The next and last figure is the sword over the bow. By that we learn that the Indians are about to be exterminated by the whites, as the bow represents the natives, and the sword the *long knives or whites*.

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This cut or figure which we have transcribed, and offered the above as a translation, was prominently etched on the smoothed surface of a small tree, near the Indian trail which the Indians were daily in the habit of passing.

At a short distance from this primitive telegraph, a fire was kindled in an old tree for an index or a beacon to attract the attention of the passing native.

The intense interest which this document excited, can

only be imagined by those acquainted with the condition of the Indians. *They knew* how this would affect them as a nation: *they knew* the people which surrounded them—and the object that would induce the whites to impute any crime to them for the purpose of exciting a spirit of revenge for the pretext of wresting from the rightful owners of the soil—a possession which was so much coveted, yet had never been peaceably obtained.

All that section of country bordering on on the Wisconsin and extending from the Mississippi to the great lakes, had belonged to the Winnebagoes, and held peaceably by them until within a few years previous to this occurrence, when the whites had discovered that this section of country contained the most valuable lead mines in the world, and were using every means to dispossess them.

The whites were composed of squatters, and men of desperate character. What cared they for honor or integrity? They belonged to no country! Many of them if caught within the pale of the laws, would suffer its penalties.—What were the rights of the Indians to them? Their object was money! The surest and readiest method of obtaining their wishes was to create as much excitement as possible; and could they confirm the story, (which had already gained considerable credence,) THAT THE INDIANS HAD KILLED BOTH OF THE TRADERS AT THE FOUR LAKES; THE WHOLE AMERICAN people would have asserted the quarrel and speedily revenge the outrage by a war which would end in a treaty and a concession of the land which these vagabond squatters were so anxious to obtain possession.

Those that knew the truth, and were aware that one of the traders had murdered his partner, could gain nothing by circulating the report; while if the guilt could be placed on the Indians; it would add another item to the long account, and furnish additional proof why the natives should be dispossessed.

The effect of this information upon the Indians, was to create the greatest consternation. They had come in possession of the *truth*, and not only knew who was the mur-

derer, but the disastrous effects, which the slander would have, if suffered to be affixed on the nation. Although they might affirm their innocence; yet it would not be noticed. The dead body of one of the traders was to be found in his cabin which was surrounded by Indians; many of whom were in the daily habit of visiting the premises of the deceased and the story would soon gain credence, and their guilt fully established, when left to be judged by those who wished it might be so. Notwithstanding one alternative, and one only remained to be tried to convince the whites of their innocence, viz.: to produce the *murderer*, and prove him guilty who they knew was the partner of the deceased; and as he had taken refuge in their nation, it was of vital importance that the fugitive should be taken, and their innocence established.

Those simple sons of the forest knew the important bearing which the slander imputed to them would have on their destiny—and trembled for the result. The vindictive character of the whites and their superior facilities in executing their designs; yet they felt disposed to make every effort to place the guilt where it properly belonged viz: upon PETER McNALLY, who had murdered his friend and partner, James Bawmen.

Yet one great obstacle remained:

The whites would not believe but a double murder had been committed, and McNally equally a victim with his partner, until his body was produced either dead or alive.

In the present condition this could not be easily effected. McNally had married and otherwise connected himself with the principal chiefs of the Winnebago tribe. He had secured the friendship of numberless persons belonging to the nation, which he now looked upon as his protectors:—and, above all, he was SECRETED BY HIS WIFE AND PLACED. With such confidants as SHE KNEW would not betray the trust imposed in them.

In this condition what was to be done?

A powerful nation encircled them who were brooding over an awful tragedy which they were willing to believe was committed by the Indians; and there was no other

resort but to produce the real murderer to show their innocence. As they dreaded immediate vengeance, and to put all their countrymen in possession of the facts, not only was it important to place them on the defence, but to bring the felon forward and place in its true light the nature of the transaction in the eyes of their vindictive neighbors; and thus render their innocence manifest.

Hence, the cause why they should have attempted the rude telegraph we have copied which was calculated to transmit the important information throughout the nation, and awaken them to a sense of their danger.

This "manuscript" document was otherwise important as an advertisement or WARRANT to cause the arrest of the homicide; and had the fugitive no friends amongst the Indians, they would have immediately surrendered him to justice, and exculpated themselves from suspicions, and thus explained the mystery.

The Indians had learned before the danger of harboring felons; and this man knew their character too well to trust himself in their power but for *one* which he *knew* could neither be intimidated by fear, or purchased by wealth to betray him.

### AN INDIAN WITNESS.

Upon the banks of the Wisconsin there was a small groupe of Indians, consisting of an aged man who wore the habiliments of a chief; two young Indians, an old squaw, and a young Indian woman, dressed in the fashion of the whites, who bore in her arms a child which appeared near the age of one year. The features of the child betrayed a mixture of the European with the aboriginal blood; and it seemed to exhibit a cheerfulness entirely at variance with the other part of the groupe, who showed a gloomy cast of features, uncommon, even to native Americans. It was readily discovered that some unpleasant ceremony was about to take place.

The old man motioned to the young woman to come near him, who advanced within a few yards—when a rifle was produced and thoroughly examined; the formalities

of cleansing the gun and adjusting the flint was performed, when a charge of powder and ball was placed in it, while the greatest care was taken to show the woman that those preparations were perfect and properly arranged.

While these death-like indications were in progress, the stern eye and rigid features of the father, (for such the chief proved to be) appeared resolved upon some desperate act which called the attention of all the attendants except the woman and child: the former stood before him with a countenance resigned: she fixed her eye upon the child, and totally disdained to bestow the least notice on the preparations of the rifle, although it was readily discovered that it was to intimidate her that so much ceremony was observed in charging the piece.

After a few moments spent in silent contemplation of the woman, the chief advanced and motioned to take the child, when she bestowed a single kiss upon its forehead, and advanced to a small bush near by, placed it upon the ground, and plucked some branches which grew near—collected a few flowers and such trifles as could readily be obtained, placed them in the hands of the child, resumed her place before her father, to all appearance, the least affected of the party. The rifle was at this juncture, resting against a tree; but when the woman had disposed of the child, the father took it in his hands, assured himself that it was in good condition; he gave it to one of the attendants, who immediately pointed it towards the woman's breast, only a few yards distant; and the sudden click of the lock gave notice of the last act of preparation for the discharge of the gun.

Few ears can immoveably receive the sharp sound which is made by fire-arms in the preparatory snap of the lock when the range of its barrel is brought to bear upon the body; but this woman heeded it not, although not a person present but shuddered in expectation of the report and the writhing victim: yet this woman showed no outward signs that those preparations implicated her existence, although, *she knew* the knell for her earthly departure had sounded; and, in all probability, an instant more and her



fate would be irrevocably sealed. Yet she heeded not all this : her eyes were bent upon the child, showing with maternal glances, a recognition of its innocent amusement and her scorn for their preparations.

At length, the old chief finding the young woman could not be intimidated by the rifle being presented to her breast, he took it from the young Indian, and, advancing with a stern countenance, he addressed her in language, as follows :—

“ My daughter, I have now come to the determination, that only on one condition will you ever move from this place alive ! However unpleasant it may be, I feel duty calls upon me to seek your life, unless you point to me the place where McNally, your husband, is concealed ! He is a murderer ! He has arisen upon his brother—and taken his life ! and not content with slaying his comrade, he deceives his countrymen, and throws the disgrace upon the innocent Indians ; and while our friends are hunted in the prairies like the deer, as the assassin of Bamer, you have concealed him—you connived at his crime, and are equally or more guilty, as you see by that infamous deception no quarter is shown our people by the merciless intruders upon the lands of the red men ; but they rejoice at a pretext to kill and destroy the friendless Indians that they may occupy the lands, and drive us from the face of the earth.

“ My child, it grieves me, but I am under the stern necessity of requiring this sacrifice. You must comply. You must show the lurking-place of your husband, or your life *must* pay the forfeit. Our people demand it, and justly too, that you *shall* show where the murderer is concealed.

“ What have the white men done since their first landing in this happy country ? What has become of the towns and villages of the red men who once lived here ? Where are the nations that once inhabited this country ? Who has been the enemy of the red men, and have come here and robbed us of our lands—made wars upon us, even to extermination ; and brought vices which were unknown to us before ? Sought by dissensions to divide and destroy us, who had never known or injured them—and are not yet



contented but commit crimes among themselves; and strive with a fiendish cunning to throw the disgrace upon us that they may have some pretext for continuing their murders and robberies upon us. What chance have we for justice? Under what disadvantages do we not labor. If an Indian kills or robs a white man, in a few days the story is printed in thousands of places, and is known to *all* their people:—revenge is in their power, and none durst raise an arm to avert their dreaded resistance; but if the poor Indian is killed, would they believe or render justice to his friends or relatives? Would they give up the murderer to be dealt with according to the usages of *our* nation? No! They would insult the emissaries of justice with,

“Go away, you are an Indian!”

“My daughter the wrongs which we sustain from the whites are many. They force us from our hunting grounds, from our mines, our corn fields, and our fisheries. Is that done because they have none? Have they not possession of all the country from the sea to the Mississippi? and yet they wish for more—and they want all—that the Indians may have none. They have succeeded in debasing us below the brutes of the forest, and now they wish to exterminate us. They are not satisfied with the effect of the vices which are introduced amongst us—that mode of destruction is too tardy—wars, famine and persecution must be added, and those destroyers of your people, your friends and relatives you strive to befriend and exculpate from crimes which, *you know* they are guilty of committing.

Your husband brought whiskey in our nation—when the Indian drank of it he became addicted to its use, and then became a vagabond on the earth; yet you wish to preserve his life, that he may bring more misery upon our nation.

“Why do you wish to conceal the man that would murder his partner? Are you not in danger of falling beneath his vengeance? The man that would kill his friend and partner, only waits for an opportunity to destroy his wife. Such persons have no love nor affection for their kindred—even the meanest reptile that crawls upon the earth, has more fellow-feeling—for *they* burrow together in harmony.

If you have no regard for yourself, you owe some respect to our nation : and, so long as he is concealed amongst us, the whites will ascribe the murder of both to the Indians—and will they be idle ? Will they not take vengeance on every one they can find ? How many have already fallen before their hunters, we know not. The time is precious : we know not what plans they are forming to destroy us ; yet, by disclosing where he is, we shall avert the calamity. By concealing him, you show contempt for your nation and relatives ; as the white men will believe we have murdered both the traders, and will punish the innocent for protecting the guilty.

“I seek not your life ;—our people do not demand it ; but, with justice, they ask you to deliver them from the ignominy and danger which the enraged whites will visit upon them, if you persist in concealing the murderer.

“My daughter, there is no alternative : our chiefs in council *demand* the murderer, not your life but your father thinks if you prefer the society of a villain to your kindred, you are unworthy of his protection.

“Therefore prepare and decide immediately ; and do not delay until too late, as you may rely upon the truth of our assertions.”

The old chief called upon her in the most affectionate terms to comply, and surrender her husband ; but she rejected with scorn all such overtures. Stepping out before them, she spoke in real native eloquence, to the following effect.

My father, even the hunted deer will spurn the pursuer of her fawn ! She presents her impotent brow to the hunter in protection of her offspring ; but me, your child, you would deprive of life—and for what ? Is it for any crime of my own ? Is it for want of affection for you ? Or am I unkind to our people ? No ! It is for nothing *I have* done ! But you wish me to commit a crime the most revolting ! You wish me to debase and render myself unworthy of life—to purchase a few years of miserable existence ! I scorn such unworthy artifices ! I would hate myself and be hated by our people ! My life has ever been at your disposal ; but you approach not my husband so long as I have the

power to conceal him! This is the proudest hour of my existence; and happy am I, that fortune has placed me in a situation to render assistance and protection to one that I am bound by so many ties to love, honor and cherish.

You may say my husband has faults—it is not for his wife to see them. I am his partner, and, as such, am bound to conceal his imperfections as my own: and I feel honored that I can, in this manner, testify my regard for him, and show the confidence placed in me, is merited.

If he has committed the crimes you speak of, there is a power above which can find and punish him. When God seeks the guilty, he does not place a deadly weapon to the breast of a woman, and say,

“Go find me a man, for I would kill him!”

If you seek the life of my husband, do not ask me to partake with you in the crime. Let those whom he has injured, seek redress. I have received nought but kindness from him, and why should I seek his destruction? But, supposing he had ever used me unkindly—*now* is the time it should be forgotten.

No human being is perfect—God alone is faultless! Neither you nor the enemies of my husband know the causes which led him to the act you impute to him. God knows, and vengeance is his; and we should be content for him to do justice, without usurping his authority.

You tell me of the degradation of our people—wherein is my husband in fault for that?

You impute, as a crime to him, that the whites have wronged us. Were we never wronged by any but the whites? Have no other nations made war upon us; destroyed our cornfields; our fisheries, and our hunting? and have we not done the same? Have not the Winnebagoes oppressed the Sacs and Foxes, the Otowas, or any nation whom we thought our inferiors.

How often has my father gone to the wars for the purpose of exterminating some neighboring people! as well may you consider that a fault of *mine*. I am as much accountable for those depredations, as my husband is for those of the whites.

If the white men have wronged us, those who have done the injustice, are to blame for the offence. If our nation has become degraded, it is the fault of our people. Delivering my husband into hands of those who will take his life, will neither redress the wrongs which the Indians have suffered from the whites, nor retrieve our condition.

The man whom I have selected for my partner and protector, is dearer than life. You may execute vengeance on me, for I shall *not* reveal the place of his concealment. Had I a thousand lives to sacrifice, they would be cheerfully given rather than betray him.

I fear death less than dishonor.

The time may come, when *you*, while passing my grave, will remember the great crime you are about to commit.

As I ask no mercy for myself, let me ask one favor. It is all I ask, and I shall die contented. You are welcome to *my life*, if you will spare that child! I beseech you by all the affections you have ever borne towards me—by the dying breath of its mother to protect that child! I implore you by the affinity which it bears to you, and the innocent smiles with which it regards you, to remember the offspring of your daughter. I have nothing more to say.—My life is at your disposal.”

By a sign from the old chief, the young Indian took up the rifle and presented the muzzle to her breast, while she, turning towards him, opened the bosom of her dress, when one more appeal was made; but she persisted in her former determination.

The old chief becomingfully satisfied that she would not disclose the hiding-place of her husband, was too true to his promise—he gave the word—the short sharp report of the rifle—she fell and expired without a groan—a martyr of constancy to a MURDERER.

Notwithstanding the solicitude of the Indian woman to conceal her husband, he was afterwards taken by the Indians, and surrendered to the whites for trial—but acquitted, *probably*, for the want of proper management in obtaining competent witnesses.







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